

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 00881 01 OF 02 010324Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W

-----010337 083816 /67

R 281502Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9904

AMEMBASSY MADRID

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 0881

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SW, SP

SUBJECT: THAW IN SWEDISH-SPANISH RELATIONS?.

REF: STOCKHOLM 866 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. TWO DEVELOPMENTS IN SWEDISH-SPANISH RELATIONS OCCURRED LAST WEEK OF POTENTIAL HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: (1) THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WAS PRAISED BY A SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER FOR ITS CURRENT EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM THE COUNTRY INTO A DEMOCRACY; AND (2) IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SWEDEN'S HIGHEST-RANKED CAREER DIPLOMAT WOULD SOON BE MAKING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO MADRID AT THE INVITATION OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. NEITHER DEVELOPMENT
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PAGE 02 STOCKH 00881 01 OF 02 010324Z

HAS PROBABLY OCCURRED IN MORE THAN 40 YEARS. FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SHOULD EFFORTS TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN BE SUCCESSFUL, THE GROUND WORK WILL HAVE BEEN LAID FOR A SUBSTITUTION OF THE HISTORICALLY COOL BUT CORRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WITH A MORE NORMAL, FRIENDLIER ONE.

2. THE SPEECH OF FOREIGN MINISTER KARIN SODER ON
FEBRUARY 23 IN STOCKHOLM DEVOTED TO EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
INCLUDED CAREFUL REFERENCES TO SPAIN WHICH THE EMBASSY BELIEVES
WORTH QUOTING IN FULL, GIVEN THEIR SIGNIFICANCE AS A
PROBABLE TURNING POINT IN SWEDISH-SPANISH RELATIONS:
BEGIN QUOTE. WE ALL FOLLOWED WITH DEEP CONCERN THE ACTS
OF TERRORISM BY SPANISH EXTREMIST GROUPS A FEW WEEKS AGO.
THERE IS STILL A RISK THAT ACTIONS OF THIS KIND MAY LEAD
TO A RELAPSE INTO OLD METHODS AND A STEP BACKWARDS IN THE
PROMISING SPANISH DEVELOPMENT. IN A COMPARATIVELY SHORT
TIME, THE SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS STARTED TO BE
TRANSFORMED. A STRONG AND DETERMINED OPPOSITION HAS
SPEEDED UP THIS PROCESS. THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS, FOR
ITS PART, SHOWN PROOF OF DETERMINATION TO TRANSFORM THE
COUNTRY INTO A DEMOCRACY. OF COURSE, IMPORTANT STEPS
STILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN. FOR EXAMPLE, WE FIND IT ONLY
NATURAL THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE
PART IN THE COMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. BUT PROGRESS
IS BEING MADE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WITH A SPEED THAT
MUST INSPIRE RESPECT. THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND
READINESS TO COOPERATE SHOWN BY BOTH SIDES DURING THE
LATEST CRISIS HAS AROUSED OUR ADMIRATION. WE LOOK
FORWARD TO THE TIME WHEN SPAIN CAN AT LEAST TAKE ITS
RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE DEMOCRATIC EUROPE. END QUOTE.

3. TWO DAYS LATER, ON FEBRUARY 25, THE PRESS ANNOUNCED
THAT SVERKER ASTROM, MFA PERMANENT UNDERSECRETARY
AND SWEDEN'S HIGHEST-RANKED CAREER DIPLOMAT, WOULD MAKE
AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO MADRID IN MARCH AT THE INVITATION OF THE
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PAGE 03 STOCKH 00881 01 OF 02 010324Z

SPANISH GOVERNMENT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 00881 02 OF 02 010331Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 0881

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCES, THE TWO DEVELOPMENTS LAST WEEK COULD MARK THE HISTORIC TURNING POINT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN SWEDEN AND SPAIN. WE ARE INFORMED THAT ASTROM ACTUALLY LEFT FOR MADRID ON FEBRUARY 27 AND WILL BE RETURNING TO STOCKHOLM ON MARCH 2. IN ADDITION TO TALKS WITH HIS COUNTERPART AT MFA (LARA?), ASTROM WILL, WE UNDERSTAND, BE MEETING MEMBERS OF SEVERAL SPANISH POLITICAL PARTIES INCLUDING THE SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' FAVORITE IN THE SPANISH RACE, THE PSOE OF FELIPE GONZALEZ. OUR MFA SOURCES SAY THAT ASTROM'S VISIT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH PALME, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER SVEN ANDERSSON AND OTHER SDP LEADERS WHO THROUGHOUT THEIR POLITICAL CAREERS HAVE HAD KNEE-JERK RESPONSES AGAINST ANY THOUGHT OF RAPPROACHMENT
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PAGE 02 STOCKH 00881 02 OF 02 010331Z

WITH MADRID. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE-mentioned TEST OF WATERS' PURPOSE IN MADRID, ANOTHER IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ASTROM'S TRIP IS TO GAIN A DOMESTIC POLITICAL REACTION TO USCH A RAPPROACHMENT. THUS FAR, THE SWEDISH MEDIA, INCLUDING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND COMMUNIST PRESS, HAVE GIVEN LITTLE INDICATION OF HOW THEY VIEW THE ASTROM TRIP.

5. THE SWEDES HAVE INDICATED TO THE SPANISH THAT THEY EXPECT ASTROM TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE TOTALITY OF SWEDISH RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. ASTROM WILL BE BROACHING OR WILL BE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO A POSSIBLE FUTURE EXCHANGE OF VISITS AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL. THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF THE VISIT IS NOT, HOWEVER, IN WHAT MIGHT BE SAID ON ANY PARTICULAR SUBJECT. THE FACT THAT THE VISIT ITSELF NOW TAKES PLACE IS BY FAR THE MORE EARTHSHAKING

FEATURE AS FAR AS SWEDEN IS CONCERNED.

6. EMBASSY MFA SOURCES CAREFULLY POINT OUT THAT THE ROAD TO CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH SPAIN IS STILL A LONG ONE. SHOULD THE EVOLUTION TOWARD FULL PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRATIC RULE IN SPAIN BE UNDULY DELAYED FOR ANY REASON, A TERMINATION OF THE THAWING PROCESS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE INITIATED FROM STOCKHOLM. THIS FIRST SWEDISH SALLY TOWARD NORMALIZATION THEREFORE IS BEING CARRIED OUT WITH VERY LITTLE PUBLICITY. UPON HIS RETURN TO STOCKHOLM, ASTROM IS TO BRIEF SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE SWEDISH PRESS BUT, WE ARE INFORMED, NO DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AS A RESULT OF HIS FIRST-EVER VISIT TO SPAIN ARE TO BE EXPECTED. THE EMBASSY WOULD FIND IT MOST EXTRAORDINARY, NEVERTHELESS, IF THE ASTROM MISSION TO MADRID DOES NOT TOUCH OFF A NATIONAL DISCUSSION ON SPANISH POLITICS AND INTENTIONS, AS WELL AS ON THE WISDOM OF THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS NOW APPARENTLY UNDERWAY. IT BEGINS TO LOOK POSSIBLE THAT THE DOOR TO BETTER RELATIONS COULD AT LEAST
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PAGE 03 STOCKH 00881 02 OF 02 010331Z

START TO CREAK OPEN.
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Message Attributes

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